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Physical and Commercial Geography. By H. E. GREGORY, A. G. KELLER, and A. L. BISHOP. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1910. 8vo, pp. viii+469.

This book is a treatise on what might be called the "science of environment." Part I deals with the nature of the physical environment against which man is forced to react in the struggle for existence. Part II considers the influence of natural environment on man, while Part III gives an interpretative discussion of the geography of trade.

The aim of the book is to prove that man continues to be subject to the various environmental influences with which he found himself surrounded. Consequently so-called conquests over nature really originate in skilful adaptation to the action of natural forces and the influence of natural conditions. Trade is taken as the epitome of reaction on natural environment. Trade based on natural conditions is shown to have been a great factor in civilization. The data of modern trade are interpreted and related. There is a consistent treatment of types rather than the totality of data. No attempt is made to cover the whole field of trade nor to discuss all the materials of commerce, but attention is given to the United States, and the British and German empires, as illustrating the fundamental principles of commercial geography.

It is obvious that the book is a beginning in the correlation of the various phases of natural and social sciences. As a result this pioneer work seems at times a medley of facts from physiography, anthropology, industrial history, and commercial geography. In the desire to cover systematically the relation of man and society to the whole natural environment the work was undertaken by triple authorship corresponding practically to the three parts. This expresses the belief that the study of the environmental relations of man requires contributions from both the natural and social sciences and is best undertaken by a combination of workers. The pages are spread with cross-references to aid the teacher and student.

At places the book is marred by the insertion of such commonplaces as "soil is the covering of the earth" (p. 61), and that human societies may be broadly distinguished on the basis of climate, or as civilized and uncivilized, commercial and non-commercial (p. 142). Further, there is an unfortunate tendency to use such hackneyed phrases as "scoring against nature," "longer wind," "a dead time," and "downhill to England."

The book is pre-eminently a text, and as such adheres to topical arrangement and secures perspective rather than detail. It is, however, valuable to the general reader. Its recognition of the interrelation of the various sciences is a move in the right direction and prepares the way for more adequate and satisfactory correlation.

W. J. DONALD

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The National Land System, 1785-1820. By PAYSON JACKSON TREAT. New York: E. B. Treat & Co., 1910. 8vo, pp. xiii+426.

This is a careful, scientific study of a most important subject—the national land system. The author has made full and intelligent use of the numberless government documents bearing upon the topic and he has not failed to take into

consideration the secondary works which offer assistance, and a useful bibliography is appended.

The chapters on the public domain, the origin of the federal land system, and the land system under the Confederation give a brief but satisfactory survey of the early development of the national land question. In these chapters we have accounts of wrangles in Congress about the cessions of state lands, the satisfying of revolutionary claims and grants, and the actual sales of large areas to prospective colonists like the Ohio Company. Facts and figures are given in tables and summaries which must prove serviceable to scholars in general as well as to the others who are particularly interested in the subject.

That millions of acres of land were sold by the government to settlers at very low prices and on a credit basis may appear to some as surprising; but this only emphasizes the desire of Congress to serve the people as a whole rather than speculators. Many millions of these acres were never paid for and not infrequently the land agents were compelled to declare the claims of settlers, who could not pay for their lands, forfeited, sometimes houses and other improvements being given up. So long as the credit system prevailed Congress was annually urged by thousands of settlers to extend the time of payment, or remit interest, or reduce the price of the land, and not infrequently the granting of relief only complicated the situation or the failure to grant it contributed to the financial panics or crises. Especially was this the case in the years immediately preceding the abandonment of the system by the government in 1820.

There are many romantic ventures safely embalmed in the dry history of the public lands and their distribution. The French colonists of Ohio, the refugees of Napoleon's armies, who sought to establish the wine industry of France in Alabama, and the Canadians who served the American Revolutionists, all received repeated attentions from Congress. Ambitious "empire builders" like John Cleve Symes and Judge Richard Henderson left records of their great schemes in the files of musty manuscripts which filled the land offices; but few know anything of them. All of these ventures receive treatment in Professor Treat's pages, though only as they contributed to the solution of the land problem.

The book closes with 1820, but there is the suggestion that other volumes are to appear and that the history of the subject will be brought down to the present time—to the beginning of the "conservation movement," when there is little to conserve.

WILLIAM E. DODD

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Banking Practice and Foreign Exchange. Modern Business, Vol. VI. By HOWARD McNAYR JEFFERSON and FRANKLIN ESCHER. New York: Alexander Hamilton Institute, 1910. Large 8vo, pp. xiv+407.

The book is in two parts, the first being devoted to banking practice. There is no attempt to deal with the subject of banking from the theoretical point of view. It is a description of the modern bank and the banking business as viewed by one familiar with all the methods of the business. It is simple and clear, though the reader sometimes feels that the book has been needlessly packed with figures giving pages from ledgers, journals, and other books.